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HORRORS

OF THE

NEGRO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

IN THE BRITISH COLONIES:

4265. 208

AS DETAILED AT THE PUBLIC BREAKFAST GIVEN BY THE CITIZENS OF BIRMINGHAM,

TO

MR JOSEPH STURGE,

ON RETURNING FROM HIS BENEVOLENT MISSION TO THE WEST INDIES.

JUNE 6, 1837.

W. & W. MILLER, 90, BELL STREET, GLASGOW.

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MDCCCXXXVII.

HONORS

OF THE

ROYAL

NEGRO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

IN THE BRITISH COLONIES:

AS SET FORTH IN THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT

1845

Family of
William Lloyd Garrison,
July 8, 1899.

ON RECEIVING FROM HIS SECRETARY ADVISE TO THE NEWSPAPER

1899

NEW YORK

1899

NEW YORK

GLASGOW

PRINTED BY W & W MILLER, 20, BELL STREET

MDCCCXCVIII

PUBLIC BREAKFAST TO MR STURGE,

AT BIRMINGHAM.

4265.208

The scene in the Town Hall on Tuesday morning was deeply interesting. The tables were well supplied by Mr Lisseter, and the arrangements for the breakfast were more perfect than any previous one at which we were present.

There were nearly 500 ladies and gentlemen present, of all sects and parties; and the elevated cross table was filled by gentlemen of the first respectability. The high bailiff, R. WEBB, Esq. presided; on his right sat the zealous, devoted, and exemplary friend of the Negro, JOSEPH STURGE, Esq., and on his left the low bailiff, J. JAMES, Esq. The proceedings were deeply exciting, and the facts detailed evidently produced a rooted conviction on the minds of all present that the generosity of the English nation had been foolishly lavished on a set of men, who for the most part are a disgrace to human nature.

The CHAIRMAN opened the business of the meeting by saying that they were met that day for the purpose of congratulating and receiving their guest, Mr Joseph Sturge, upon his safe return amongst them. (Loud and repeated cheers.) That gentleman left his native shores with the best feeling of benevolence and sympathy for some of the most degraded of the human race. They must all, more or less, participate in his feelings, and be grateful and thankful to him for his noble exertions, under the many perils and privations he must have suffered in carrying his benevolent intentions into execution. (Cheers.) As he was sure the feelings of the meeting would be much better expressed in the address to be presented to Mr Sturge, than by any expression of feeling which he (the chairman) could give utterance to, he would not farther trespass on their time, than by calling upon Mr Marsh to read the address. (Cheers.)

The Rev. WILLIAM MARSH rose amidst general cheering. He said that he rose with great pleasure, in compliance with the request of the committee, to read the address to their beloved friend, on the happy occasion of his safe return in the midst of them. (Cheers.) It would be strange indeed if those who were thus assembled together, could not meet for such a purpose of benevolence without regard to religious or political distinctions; and he rejoiced to find mingled that day together, men of various minds, and of various opinions, on many subjects, who had united in a subject which belonged to them as rational creatures—on a subject which belonged to them as Britons—(hear)—on a subject which belonged to them as Christians—(cheers)—on a subject which belonged to them as accountable beings, who must give an account one day to their Creator for their conduct towards their fellow creatures. (Cheers.) On the propriety of returning thanks to their friend upon this occasion, he entertained no doubt, when he found an apostle of their religion, who would have laid down his life for the cause of Christianity, recommending that honour should be given to whom honour was due. If, however, a beloved friend from amongst themselves would devote his property, and expose his life in the cause of liberty and humanity, he said such an individual was one who deserved not only their thanks, but the thanks of every friend of liberty, and every friend of man. (Cheers.) He should think it wrong on the present occasion, knowing the manner in which their

time was to be occupied, if he detained them longer than by discharging that interesting part of his duty—reading the address to be presented to Mr Sturge. (Cheers.) Mr Marsh then read the following address from the members of the Anti-Slavery Society, and signed by Captain Moorsom, on behalf of the committee.

“ TO JOSEPH STURGE, Esq.

“ DEAR SIR—Several months have elapsed since we had the gratification, in common with many of our fellow townsmen, of addressing you on the occasion of your departure to the West Indies, for the purpose of examining those scenes of horror, the story of which has oft times caused the philanthropist's heart to bleed : and of investigating those animating circumstances, in the contemplation of which, the best and holiest emotions of our nature have frequently been excited.

“ At that time we expressed the deep interest we felt in your mission, to procure correct information as to the working of the system of modified slavery still in operation in the western colonies. We declared our determination that the legislative measure for emancipating the negroes should, if possible, carry with it the entire substance of liberty, and not its mere name ; and though we anticipated opposition in your work, and even danger to your person, we confided in Him, who is mighty to save, and who could not but look with complacency on your labour of love.

“ Ever since that period we traced with no ordinary degree of interest, your journeyings in the islands of the west ; we rejoiced in the arrival of intelligence communicating your acts and objects ; we attentively considered the reports, and deeply sympathised in the feelings, conveyed by your letters : while toil and difficulties surrounded you, we engaged in supplication to heaven on your behalf ; we indulged the pleasing hope that some advance would be made in the cause of Negro emancipation, by reason of your benevolent exertions, and we joyfully looked forward to that period when we should have an opportunity of hailing your restoration to the circle in which, during many years, you have moved, and have been during all that time gathering golden opinions around you.

“ That period having now arrived, suffer us to address you with the voice of congratulation. We are happy that the honour of being in advance on this field of philanthropy should distinguish our own friend, our fellow townsman ; and that looking upon every man as your brother, and upon all the world as your country, your sympathies are co-extensive with your views. When, therefore, the piercing cry of suffering arose from the oppressed inhabitants of the west, your sympathies were instantly extended towards them ; and we pray that they may not have been extended in vain. In the same noble cause other men sympathised, other men laboured, long and painfully laboured, and though sometimes tempted to despair that there was an arm sufficiently powerful to save, yet God, though unperceived, was with them, and we ardently hope that He will continue to uphold and direct you in your benevolent labours, and enable you to carry forward their glorious design. While we speak in the language of confidence, it is a confidence, founded on clear indications, which induces us to express our conviction, that He who is not slack concerning his promise, and who hath strengthened us in many of our former efforts for the enfranchisement of our race, will not now forsake us while prosecuting a cause, which must meet with His approval, involving as it does, the temporal and eternal happiness of hundreds of thousands of immortal beings whom He formed for enjoyment. Therefore do we congratulate you, and we anticipate the consummation of your wishes, and of our own, in the speedy extinction of a system, calculated to dishonour God, and to debase his rational creation.

“ We cannot conclude this address without expressing our earnest desire that whatever may be the immediate result of the efforts now making on behalf of the oppressed, the victims of the accursed system which now regulates our colonies may at least have more frequent and more unrestrained opportunities for receiving the mitigating consolations of religion. We are assured that under its animating influence the Negro will be better enabled to sustain through its continuance his present bitter bondage ; that when by its means he shall have been raised from his state of civil and social degradation, and his natural liberty shall have been granted him, he will be prepared to participate in the sympathies and charities of social life, that his mental degradation shall also cease, and that arising in a moral and religious dignity, imparted to him by the gospel, he shall benignantly and effectually render blessings to those who have so long maligned and oppressed him, and stand as a monument of the success of our righteous cause which aims at the practical fulfilment of the heavenly precept, to do unto others as we wish that others should do unto us.”

At the conclusion, the Rev. W. Marsh, in presenting the address to Mr Sturge, said—I have great pleasure, my beloved friend, in presenting to you this address : and I am sure, in common with all around me, we feel thankful to that kind and watchful Providence who has brought you in the midst of us this day in so much health and safety. We may repeat the idea contained in the address, by expressing a hope that your labours have not been in vain ; indeed, we are persuaded, under the blessing of heaven, that they cannot have been in vain. I thank you, therefore, in the name of this assembly, for your faithful and unwearied exertions in behalf of the unhappy negro, and with sub-

mission to that Providence which has protected you in your labour of love, I may say, that while memory holds her seat within us, or while anything like human sympathy or feeling exists in our bosoms, we shall stand by you in this sacred cause till we have struck the last fetter off the slave, and achieved the full and entire emancipation of our oppressed fellow-men. (Loud and enthusiastic cheering.)

Mr STURGE here rose under deep and evident emotion; but he was so oppressed and overpowered by his feelings, that it was some time before he could give utterance to a word. He at length said—Though I cannot but very deeply feel your kind and affectionate expression towards me on my return amongst you, yet I can sincerely say, that nothing but an earnest desire to promote the cause of our poor oppressed fellow subjects, could ever have induced me to consent to be so peculiar an object of your attention this day; or to take a part so opposed to my habits and inclination. I fear in bringing the subject before you, I shall disappoint you, not from a want of matter, but from a want of ability properly to state it; for I confess there are various feelings which oppress and almost overwhelm me, not the least of which is the deep and humiliating conviction of the immeasurable difference between what you indulgently suppose me to be, and which I feel I am. I need not dwell on the motives which induced me and my friends to undertake the mission; or why some of us felt that we could not be satisfied with the investigation of a committee of the House of Commons, a majority of whom were either slave owners themselves, or under circumstances in which an acknowledgment of a violation of the imperial act, must bring condemnation on them or their friends; and the report from them at the close of last session must convince all who have studied the subject of the influence under which it was drawn up. (Hear.) I thought it best to be thus explicit, because I expect everything that is reported to-day will go to the West Indies; with this expectation, I think it best not to mention the names of parties in the communications which I am about to make to you. (Hear.) After consulting with those of my friends who have long laboured in this cause, it was concluded that our mission to the West Indies should be independent of any society, and entirely unshackled as to the publication of facts. As, however, one of them was of opinion that it might serve us, and the object, to have some document from the colonial office to the authorities in the colonies, I thought it best to address the following letter to Lord Glenelg, just before our departure. [Mr Sturge here read the letter to Lord Glenelg, stating the intention of him and his friends to visit the West Indies; that the object of their journey was to investigate the present state and condition of the Negroes, with a view to communicate the result to their Friends and the public; that their anxious desire was to do full justice to all, but that they should prefer pursuing their investigation through those private channels which were open to them, rather than obtain the advantage of official sanction, if accompanied by any restriction as to the publication of facts.] Subsequent events fully proved that in this they pursued the right course. As, probably, he should not again have a fitting opportunity of referring to the American question, and as he believed it would serve the cause better by not mixing it up with the West Indian one, he would now briefly do so, and then pass to the West Indies. (Hear.) During the few days (said Mr Sturge) passed at New York, I had the pleasure of meeting the committee of the National A. S. Society, and also a still larger number of the Friends to the cause at the house of one of its most zealous advocates. Their progress is most encouraging. Petitions to Congress for the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia had been signed by one hundred and ten thousand individuals. It was anticipated that at least as great a number of members, forming upwards of 1000 auxiliary societies, would be reported to the next general meeting to be held at New York in the course of last month. I had also an opportunity of seeing what liberty is in the city of New

York, in the trial of a case in which one of the southern slave-holders had claimed one of the citizens, who had resided there for a number of years, as his goods and chattels. The man had been kept in jail for weeks, and was handcuffed when brought to court. It was encouraging to observe the interest which was excited,—the court was much crowded. Our anti-slavery Friends in America say that the greatest service that we can render them is to continue our remonstrances against the guilt of the professing Christian churches. After arriving at Barbadoes, Dr Lloyd and Mr Scoble proceeded south to Demerara, and Mr Harvey accompanied him (Mr S.) to Antigua, where complete freedom had been granted to the Negroes by the local legislature on the 1st of August, 1834; and here, observed Mr Sturge, “I have great pleasure in acknowledging the uniform kindness and hospitality we received from the Moravian and Methodist missionaries in Antigua, and adding our testimony to the benefits which have resulted from their labours of love in this colony.” In the space of seven months (continued Mr Sturge) I accomplished a journey of about 12,000 miles by sea and land, and in company with my friend Thomas Harvey, whose able and efficient assistance was invaluable, we visited in Jamaica alone between thirty and forty sugar, cattle, and coffee estates; were at the Courts, or had personal communication with between twenty or thirty stipendiary magistrates; visited nearly twenty jails of different descriptions, and were at the places of worship and schools of all the principal religious denominations. Those from whom we received information amongst the white portions of the community, comprised not less than 100 individuals of almost all professions and stations in society, connected and unconnected with the planting interest. We had also access to valuable documentary evidence that had never before reached this country; but the information I most value was derived from personal communication with some of the most intelligent Negroes of from seventy to eighty estates in different parts of the island, whose veracity we ascertained from the best authority could be fully relied upon. In the prosecution of our inquiries, we had to bear in mind that it was our duty to dismiss as much as possible, any previous bias, and examine impartially the relative advantages of apprenticeship and freedom, and how far in the enjoyment of the latter, the Negroes had justified the expectations of their Friends. This, the liberality of the Antigua legislature afforded us an opportunity of doing. [Mr Sturge here read a summary of the result of their inquiries in this island, in which it appeared that the great experiment of abolition had succeeded beyond the expectations of its most sanguine advocates. The trade of the island had revived,—the people were more prosperous,—houses and land had risen in value; and the moral and religious education of the inhabitants had kept pace with this amelioration of their condition.] The little island of Monserrat, which we next visited, contains only 6000 Negroes who are in a very backward state in a religious and moral point of view. It is an interesting fact, that a disposition was at one time manifested to abolish the apprenticeship on the part of the local authorities here, which would have been carried, had the government at home encouraged it. The measure passed the council, and was lost in the assembly by one vote only. Four of the proprietors, however, granted complete freedom to their own Negroes. One or two of these informed us that they were doing more work, and they had less pilfering on the estate than formerly. (Hear.) From hence we proceeded to Dominica, which contains about 15,000 Negroes, and also a more than usual proportion of intelligent and influential people of colour. We had the pleasure of spending an evening at the house of one of them, and in a party of twelve or fourteen gentlemen and ladies, we were the only white persons present. We also visited the estates of some old resident French families, whose paternal management of their Negroes, forms a striking contrast to that of the non-resident English. There are probably not more than 200 or 300 Negroes on the whole of the island who can read, and the means of efficient instruction are greatly needed.

(Hear, hear.) We next visited the French island of Martinique, where slavery still legally exists in its unmitigated form. We afterwards went to Port Royal, the seat of the local government, and had an interview with the governor, who has felt so much interest in the working of our measure, that he has visited Antigua and some of the other British islands. One of the many evils of our apprenticeship system is its retarding emancipation in other countries, as they are waiting to see its results in our West Indian colonies. (Hear.) From Martinique we proceeded to St Lucie, containing a Negro population of about 13,000. We visited the only school in the interior which we heard of; it is on the estate of a benevolent English proprietor; but to make use of an expression of an intelligent gentleman, holding a high official situation in the colony, "not one ray from any of the benevolent and religious institutions of Britain had ever reached this island." From St Lucie we proceeded to Barbadoes. In the capital, Bridge-town, there are several excellent schools, under the superintendence of the Episcopal church and the Methodists; but in the country, where the great mass of the Negro population resides, very little comparatively is done towards procuring proper education. As a proof what an obstacle to instruction the apprenticeship presents, we found, on inquiry, there were but two children present, who were not made free by the abolition act in 1834, being then under six years of age, and the relative of these two paid something to their employer that they may be allowed to attend. From hence we proceeded to Jamaica, where we arrived after a week's pleasant voyage. Although we had obtained much information from individuals of various denominations, and particularly from the Methodist and Moravian missionaries, to whom we are indebted for much hospitality and kindness, yet these latter are under such restrictions, that whatever oppressions might exist, if we published any facts communicated by them we might expose them to the censure of their own body at home. (Hear, hear, hear.) A Moravian missionary candidly told us that if all had acted as their society did, slavery would never have been abolished. (Hear, hear.) Another, after entering into a detail of most important information, and saying it was quite a relief to unburden his mind, said that he must impose silence upon us. (Hear, hear.) A Wesleyan minister, to whom we had a letter of introduction, said that he should be glad to give us information as far as was consistent with his instructions from home; and although he received us with kindness at his own house—(shame)—I believe he would have been afraid to have been seen with us in public. Although I do not blame individuals, who act under a system subjecting them to such bondage, or think this the time to offer an opinion upon such a system, yet I do consider it important that it should be distinctly understood, that whatever may be the physical sufferings of the Negroes, we must not expect information from the Methodists and Moravians. (Loud cries of hear, hear.) I wish to pause to notice this expression of disapprobation. These religious bodies have, probably, their own reasons for not giving information, and I by no means wish to sit in judgment upon them. With these facts in view, it was under feelings of some discouragement that we approached the shores of Jamaica; but, contrary to our expectation, a concurrence of favourable, may I not say Providential circumstances, had prepared the way for our obtaining most ample information. From the missionaries generally we met with the warmest and most cordial reception, especially the Baptists and Independents; many others pressed us with offers of service, some of them persons of influence and consideration; and the authorities in the island, and the planters themselves, showed us every attention and civility. We had much opportunity of witnessing the desire for education amongst the Negroes. The planters assert they will not attend schools provided on the estates, but this is evidently from a want of confidence in them or their agents; for when they know that those who offer them instruction have only their welfare at heart, their desire to embrace it is most gratifying. I have seen

this evinced in schools connected with various religious persuasions, and especially amongst the Baptists. In one instance, we spoke to a schoolmaster provided at the expense of a peer of England, for his estate, and found he had no scholars, though he was himself *a man of colour*, and yet children go miles from this very estate to attend a Baptist school in Spanish Town! In another part of the island a school was opened a few weeks before our visit on Saturday, the Negroes' own day, and the missionary expressed a wish that the children of the people connected with his congregation, would attend at the chapel. In consequence 3172 were present, and some from a distance of upwards of twenty miles—(hear, hear)—and the missionary was so excited and affected by the number and interest displayed, that it produced a serious illness, from which he had but just recovered when we were with him. I have seen upwards of five hundred children on the Sabbath day at this school, most of them apprentices, and was informed that at a country station of the same missionary there were a still greater number on the same day. It is generally known that the (so-called) act of the British legislature for the abolition of Negro slavery in our colonies, came into operation on the 1st of August, 1834, or nearly three years ago. This act professedly granted liberty fully and freely to the Negroes, with the exception of withholding some political privileges; and for the usual allowance of food and clothing the predials, or field Negroes, were to work for their employers forty-five hours in the week, for six years, and the non-predials without limit to the hours of labour, for four years. I purpose now briefly to state, 1st, That the conditions of the contract have been fulfilled to the letter by the British government; 2d, That the conditions required of the Negroes have been performed in the most exemplary manner by them; and 3dly, That the conditions required of the planters have been violated, and continue to be violated in almost every particular in the colonies which I have been able to examine, with the exception of Antigua. (Hear, hear.) 1st, It was provided by the act that a compensation of twenty millions sterling should be paid to the planters, as soon as the colonial secretary should report to the legislature that the provisions for the benefit of the Negroes had been faithfully carried into effect by the colonial assemblies. Lord Stanley having reported to this effect to the House of Commons, and also having previously given a solemn assurance on the part of the West Indians, that they would heartily and sincerely concur in carrying out the intentions of the British legislature, the princely sum of £20,000,000 was not only paid to them, but also interest on the same, from the 1st of August, 1834. The contract of the British government with the planters for the payment of compensation, although the sum required was monstrous in amount, unsupported by any claim of justice or equity, and wholly disproportionate to any loss which has actually occurred, or which can possibly accrue, has nevertheless been fulfilled to the very letter. (Cheers.) The Negroes are quietly and industriously labouring under oppressions and injustice, which, were they not the most patient race on earth, or restrained by religious principle, would drive them to desperation. I now proceed to the important consideration of the conduct of the authorities, through whom justice ought to be administered; and of the planters and agents towards the Negroes. I went out with a determination, if possible, not to be biased in my judgment by any opposition or harshness I might experience; but so far from being in danger of having my prejudices excited against the planters by anything of the kind, I have to acknowledge, without a single exception, nothing but courtesy and attention from all classes of society. (Hear, hear.) I may, however, mention at the same time, one or two amusing facts which came under our notice, to show the sort of information which we were likely to get from the planters and local authorities, had we adopted their views. In visiting a celebrated estate in the island of Jamaica, in company with the attorney, one or two stipendiary magistrates, and the attorney-general, we were shown through the Negro houses by a favourite Negro. While there, a woman, who had some

grievance to complain of, thinking it most probably a very good opportunity to make it, came up to us for that purpose, when the head Negro turned round and sharply rebuked her, asking if she had not better manners than to give her master's property a bad character. (Laughter.) While on a visit shortly after, to a planter, well known for his humanity, his lady told us that a few days before some Negroes from an adjoining estate had enquired of her if there were not some gentlemen coming to see them; for "they had been white-washing the dungeon, and clearing up the hospital." (Renewed laughter.) Mr Sturge next proceeded to notice the conduct of the planters in Barbadoes. In the district of one of the stipendiary magistrates, there were, in the space of one month, 226 complaints against labourers, who received the following punishments; 697 days of confinement and hard labour; 517 Saturdays forfeited to the estate; 127 days of solitary confinement; and 180 days on the tread-mill; making altogether 1521 days; and independent of the suffering and wrong inflicted, the poor Negro is afterwards compelled to pay this out of his own time, and consequently his whole Saturday is forfeited to his master. (Loud cries of shame, shame.) While we were in Barbadoes circumstances occurred which led us to deviate from a rule which we had laid down, not to agitate the question of the working of the apprenticeship system there, knowing well that if the battle was to be fought at all, it must be fought in England—(cheers)—but having heard that a strong effort was making to oblige the parents to apprentice their children, we were so alarmed that we wrote a strong letter upon the subject; and since our departure, I have received a letter, of which the following is an extract:—"I suppose you have seen Mr —'s speech on the subject of the apprenticeship of the children; he therein states that no one ever tried to influence the parents to bind their children. Thus far well. I am quite convinced that your letter was the cause of his saying so; if not slavery would have been continued in the colonies under a new name. Thus far you see good has been done already. The — has been terribly abused by the authorities; they accuse him of having told you all that is going on. I only mention this that you may see how a man is used in the West Indies for speaking truths which are at variance with what is miscalled wholesome government. Like the Jews of old, I hope their eyes may be opened to them, for I think blindness has happened to them, not in part, but altogether, as it regards the slave question." (Hear, hear.) I shall now proceed to some facts respecting Jamaica; but they are so voluminous, that I will confine myself to a very few of those which came under my own observation, and which I had from the lips of the sufferers themselves. (Hear.) These facts I shall take in the order of the various places which we visited; and I think they will show that almost all the provisions of the imperial act have been violated on the part of the planters. At —, we saw some members of a Christian church, one of whom was a constable, and said he found it very difficult to act according to his oath. He was frequently obliged to remonstrate with the overseer, on account of the oppression which he practised. The people were deprived of their usual allowances of salt fish and salt, and had not more than half their former quantity of clothing. They were likewise deprived of their time, the overseer taking it when he wanted it, and it was a very hard thing to get him to repay it. They also informed us that they had been flogged or sent to the tread-mill who had never been punished in their lives before, under the old system. Two of these were present. One, a man who was a carpenter on an estate; one of his fellow-servants died; he went instantly to his master, who gave him no orders about the coffin, and because he refused to make it in his own time, he was brought up for insolence, and with another of the Negroes, an excellent deserving woman, sent to the tread-mill. (Shame.) He showed us one of his legs, which was much injured by the mill. A poor woman who was present had been most spitefully treated. She was the mother of eight children, and in weak health, and because she did not work on the first

gang, (where the hardest labour is to be performed,) the overseer got her sent to the tread-mill. She had the best house on the estate, but the overseer pulled it down and destroyed her grounds. (Shame, shame.) If a free child is taken ill, parents have to pay back the time they spend in attending to it, and if they take them to the doctor, they have to pay him. As I have made mention of the tread-mill, I shall endeavour to describe what it is, for I believe the people of this country have no idea of it. Almost every one of these instruments of punishment is of a different construction. This was a cylinder about ten feet in diameter, with broad steps. A The hand-rail above it has eight pair of straps fastened to it, with which the hands of the prisoners are secured. T The board under the hand-rail descends perpendicularly towards the wheel, and does not therefore afford the slightest protection to the prisoners in case of their hanging. The steps of the wheel project about twelve or fifteen inches beyond the board, and are bevelled at the edge, so that the keen side revolves much against the bodies, knees, and legs of the prisoners with torturous effects. We asked the jailor at ——— whether the driver was allowed to use a cat, and asked to see the instrument. It was a whip composed of nine lashes of small cords knotted. He said it was absolutely necessary to “touch them up,” women as well as men. They struck the latter on the back, but the women on the feet. Not only all the steps, but the very drum of the mill were stained with old and recent blood, the latter being that of a poor old woman, which had been shed so profusely, that even the sand on the floor underneath was thickly sprinkled with it. [This appalling statement excited the deepest feelings of indignation and horror in the meeting, in the course of which the Rev. Mr East rose and said—Allow me, Mr Sturge, to ask this question. Did you see this blood you describe as recently shed?—Mr Sturge—I saw the blood, and put the question myself to the jailor respecting the cause of it, who informed me that the poor old woman had been put on the mill that morning, and being unable to keep the step, hung for the whole fifteen minutes, suspended by the wrists, with the revolving steps beating against, and bruising her body the whole time. (Cries of monstrous, horrible, and calls of name the magistrate?) I intend to name him before a committee of the House of Commons. (Loud cheers, and cries of Is he an Englishman?) It was (continued Mr Sturge) after some consideration, that I came to the conclusion not to mention names, not that I am ashamed to do so, or that I am afraid of what I say here being reported, for it is my wish that every word I utter may go to the world, and especially to Jamaica; but I found that if I did not lay down some rule of this kind, many worthy men might be subjected to persecution there. (Cheers.) C We saw this woman the next day with the penal gang working on the roads, compelled to carry a basket of stones on her head, and chained like the rest in pairs, two and two with iron collars. S She was so dreadfully mangled, they had not attempted to put her on the mill again that morning. (Shame, shame.) Other women showed us their legs lacerated in the same cruel manner. We had afterwards an opportunity of inquiring of the Negroes from the estate to which she belonged, why she was subjected to this horrible punishment. They stated, that from her inability to labour through weakness, a former magistrate said she might cease from work; but that on a change of magistrates, her owner had sent her to look after sheep. One of them died, and the fear of punishment induced her to run away, though it did not appear that the least blame attached to her. She had been absent two months, and when found and brought back again, had this cruel punishment inflicted by order of the magistrate who is paid by this country to protect the Negro. (Shame, shame.) He could state instances which had come under his own observation where the poor Negro was mercilessly mulcted of his Saturday on the most frivolous charges, in defiance of every principle of law and justice, and the people were obliged to work their grounds on the Sabbath for a subsistence. We went to ——— in the morning to see the prisoners and

the tread-mill ; at first there were four men. The cylinder of the mill is of so small a diameter that the weight of the prisoners, when they all stepped, sent it round with such velocity that they were at once thrown off ; it moved by jerks quickly and slowly alternately, so that to keep step in the ordinary way appeared to be perfectly impossible. The prisoners were obliged to step sideways, taking two or three steps at a time in a very awkward manner ; one young man, who had never been on before, hung by the wrists the greater part of the time, after many painful attempts to catch the step ; he seemed to be in perfect torture, and cried out, " I don't know what they sent me here for ; I have done nothing to be sent here," &c. &c. When he came off he appeared quite exhausted. We were informed, on good authority, that in a whole district there was but one estate on which the people have not been deprived of their half Friday ; that the overseer, knowing it was the wish of the proprietor at home, persisted in giving them the half Friday, but that the attorney had insisted upon his not doing so, saying he would take upon himself all risk as to its illegality ; and, before I left, these people were deprived of their time like the rest. Mr Sturge next mentioned the case of a poor woman who had three children. She had been ill for nearly four years, and being unable to do anything for herself, she had been put into the dungeon for three or four days at a time by her master, and taken out again without any authority from a magistrate. When locked up, her child had been deprived of the breast a whole day and night, and when she was brought before the justice, he refused to punish her, from the weak condition in which she was. The facts related by Mr Sturge, relative to the treatment of females, were of the most thrilling description. Not only were they most cruelly punished, but their infants also suffered from the inhuman treatment of their parents. The men and women work in penal gangs in chains. The case of ten women, with children, in jail, was this :—They said that on Friday morning last, as it was very wet they did not turn into the field before breakfast on account of their children ; for this, on the Monday, they were brought before the special justice, and ordered to pay five Saturdays ; they told him they could not, as their provision grounds were six miles off, they did not get their half Fridays, nor their salt-fish, nor flour, nor sugar for their infants, and that without their Saturdays they were destitute of the means of support. This refusal of theirs to submit to so unrighteous a decision, appears to have been construed into rebellion. They were sent to the workhouse for three days, and will still have to pay their Saturdays. Pregnant women are often obliged to pay back most of the time their masters lose by their confinement. They are not permitted to leave the field to suckle their children, and when they complain of this cruelty, their masters turn round upon them, and say, they do not care what becomes of them, for they are free children. (Shame.) Though the cases read (continued Mr Sturge) are but a faint outline of the facts we ourselves collected, yet they are probably enough to excite the surprise and indignation of all who have heard them ; but it may be shown that the present state of things is the natural result of the measures pursued, and the instruments employed. The execution of this momentous moral experiment, on the successful issue of which the great question of the abolition of slavery throughout the civilised world so much depended, is intrusted ; first, and mainly to the drivers, book-keepers, overseers, and attorneys, to whom the proprietors in England delegate the management of their estates ; for I believe not one in ten of the proprietors reside on them. The planting attorneys are the aristocracy of the country : many of them have seats in the legislature ; most of them were originally book-keepers and overseers, and have recommended themselves to their employers by their superior skill in the extortion of the greatest amount of uncompensated labour from the slaves. The overseer may be cruel and unjust with impunity, provided he increases the crop of sugar and coffee ; but he dare not be more humane than his neighbours, even though it may be the wish of the proprietor. Their employ-

ment mainly depends on the continuance of the present system, which enables them and their subordinates to lead lives too profligate for description. Yet with a certain knowledge of their infamous character, these men continue to be employed by the non-resident proprietors, mortgagees, and merchants, in this country, some of whom are political reformers, and others religious professors. (Hear, hear, and cries of shame.) The stipendiary magistrates generally have been selected as having no bias in favour of the Negro; some of them honestly endeavoured to do their duty, but most of these either fell sacrifices to the climate, annoyances and persecutions, to which they were subjected, or resigned in disgust. A large proportion of those who now remain are mere tools of the planters. One of them was known, before his appointment, to have been active in destroying the Baptist chapels. (Hear, hear.) I am (said Mr Sturge) about to offer an opinion here, in which I shall not be charged with partiality. It is that the administration of the colonial department, under what was called the Tory party, was more merciful to the Negroes than under the present administration. (Hear, hear.) Sir George Murray was an honourable instance of this; and I must say, whoever wrote the dispatches during the administration of Lord Aberdeen, some of them did honour to the head and heart of the writer. (Hear.) I may be asked for a few facts in support of this opinion; and I will here refer first to the conduct of Lord Stanley, who, when the twenty millions were granted to the planters, did not oblige them to pay, nor did he recompense the Baptists out of the British exchequer, even one-third of the amount of the property lost in the destruction of their chapels, and though something more was granted under Spring Rice, a large portion of it was supplied by the voluntary contributions of the English people. But farther, there were eleven magistrates publicly known to have assisted in destroying their chapels, and not one of them up to this day have been removed from office for it. He would go still farther than this and mention, that one who assisted in this infamous proceeding, is appointed a special magistrate, and now receiving £450 a-year from this country to see justice done to the Negro. (Shame.) He would now come to a more recent period. When Sir Lionel Smith came to Jamaica, a commission was appointed to inquire into the cause of complaint of the planters against the conduct of Dr Palmer, who is present this day. (Cheers.) This commission consisted of two local magistrates, both of them planters or managers of estates, and two stipendiary magistrates, one of whom at least if he had any bias, it was against Dr Palmer. (Hear.) At the conclusion of their inquiry they summed up their report by saying that they considered Dr Palmer had administered the abolition law in the spirit of the English abolition act, and in his administration of the law he had adapted it more to the comprehension of freemen than to the understanding of apprenticed labourers. (Much laughter.) Now would they believe it, that not only did Sir Lionel Smith suspend Dr Palmer on this report, but the colonial office at home have dismissed him from his situation. (Shame.) The effect of such a proceeding as this was to discourage every honest man who was disposed to act fairly towards the Negroes. (Hear, hear.) He could also instance the case of Lord Sligo. When this nobleman was appointed governor of Jamaica, it was considered as an act of injustice to the Negro, as he was himself a slave proprietor, and once chairman of the West Indian body. At first he committed some errors of judgment; but it was soon ascertained that he was honest in his intentions. (Hear, hear.) When he obtained an insight into the working of the system, he saw what was going forward, and endeavoured to check it. The consequence of this was, that a great storm was raised against him by the West Indian party; and it is a well known fact that some of these men applied at the colonial office at home to have him removed, and the answer they said they received in substance was, that in consequence of the estimation in which he was held by the Dissenters, who were a powerful and influential body in England, they could not remove him; but that a dispatch had

been sent which would secure his resignation, and that that resignation would be accepted. (Hear, hear.) Now, if even Lord Sligo had been sacrificed to the planters' influence, could any man hope honestly to discharge his duty in the West Indies? (Hear, hear.) There were, however, still remaining in the commission some valuable men who deserved their warmest sympathy under the bitter persecution they are suffering. He would give one instance as an illustration of this; and as the case had been before a judicial tribunal, he did not think it necessary to suppress, in this instance, the names of the parties. The facts of the case related by Mr Sturge were briefly these: his book-keeper of the name of Maclean, on the estate of the Rev. Mr Hamilton, an Irish clergyman, committed a brutal assault upon an old African. The attorney on the property refused to hear the complaint of the Negro, who went to Stephen Bourne, a special magistrate, when Maclean was brought before him; he did not deny the fact; but said as the old man was not a Christian, his oath could not be taken! The magistrate not being able to ascertain the amount of injury inflicted upon the Negro (whose head was dreadfully cut); but feeling that it was a case which required a greater penalty than £3 sterling, the amount of punishment to which he was limited by the local acts, detained Maclean, and afterwards committed him to jail, and wrote the next day to the Chief Justice upon the subject. He was discharged so soon as a doctor's certificate was procured of the state of the wounded man, and bail was given for his appearance at the assizes. Maclean's trial did come on at the assizes, and he was found guilty by a Jamaica jury; he was very severely reprimanded for his inhuman conduct, and fined £30. The poor African, however, got no remuneration for the severe injury inflicted upon him, and the special justice has been prosecuted for false imprisonment, dragged from court to court, represented as an oppressor and a tyrant, put to about £400 expenses in defending himself, and actually had judgment given against him for £150 damages. (Shame, shame.) Thus have the planters succeeded in putting down every magistrate who ventures to do more than fine them £3 sterling for any act of cruelty of which they may be guilty. The government was considered to have pledged themselves by the report of the parliamentary committee of the House of Commons, to pay Stephen Bourne's expenses, but the Governor has not yet done so, and S. Bourne was liable, when I left Jamaica, to be arrested any day, and imprisoned in Kingston jail. On the other hand, there were two magistrates who were dismissed while I was there, through, I believe, the representation of Lord Sligo, for flagrant violations of the law in their punishments: and in order to evince their sympathy for those men, he perceived by a Jamaica newspaper, that the planters were about to entertain them at a farewell dinner, and had actually set on foot a subscription, as a tribute of gratitude for their "impartial conduct in administering the laws, as special justices. (Hear, hear.) At the head of the subscription he (Mr S.) was sorry to perceive one of the most liberal minded planters he had met with, and who, he was firmly persuaded, would never have allowed them to adjudicate between him and his own apprentices on his estates, but he was carried away by the powerful influence of the public opinion of his brother planters. Thus were too men notoriously guilty of violations of law and humanity, publicly encouraged and protected, while Stephen Bourne, who according to the testimony of the present and late attorney general had acted not only justly but *legally*, was suffering every species of persecution and indignity for so doing. ("Shame, shame.") This horrid system would not end even in 1840, unless they exerted themselves in this country. (Hear, hear.) But he had dwelt long enough upon the gloomy part of the picture, and would recur for a moment to the more pleasing side of the question; and here he would first express his high gratification at the intelligence of the Negroes, and the desire for instruction amongst them. This might be observed in their large subscriptions, proportioned to their very small means, towards the building of their chapels. One missionary had told him that the Sunday before they were there, he had given

notice to his congregation that he would be in the vestry to receive subscriptions for the building of the chapel erecting ; and though the day was very wet, and the negroes were many of them suffering from being deprived of their own time, for the use of their employers, they brought to him between £70 and £80 currency. Another minister who had nearly completed one of the largest chapels in the island, at an expense of about £8,000 currency, had collected from his congregation since the commencement of the building £4,000 currency towards it. As a proof how much alive the negroes were to feelings of kindness and gratitude, he would mention that a contribution was going forward by the apprentices themselves, some months before his arrival, to present some testimony of respect to Lord Sligo, for his exertions in their behalf ; and though he understood scarcely any of them contributed more than 6d. each, it amounted to 1,000 dollars when he left the island ; he (Mr S.) was deputed to present to him a suitable piece of plate which was now preparing. (Cheers.) An instance of the way in which information spreads through the country occurred to them while travelling in a remote part of the island. They happened to be on their way to a minister's house, and observed a gang of people at work. It was pouring down rain at the time, (and he would take that opportunity of observing that they were not usually obliged to work under such circumstances during the days of slavery,) but on enquiring of one of them (a woman) who was in the road, the distance to a house they wished to find, after answering the enquiry, she addressed them nearly as follows :—" I hope you are well, massa, God bless you, massa, we have heard of you massa." (Loud cheering.) Another encouraging circumstance to which he would refer, was the number of true friends of the negro which they met with at Jamaica. He believed he had a list of between thirty and forty persons, with whom he could correspond, belonging to the various denominations and in various stations of society, who were sincere friends to the negro ; and he thought it but justice here to mention, that in this noble band, the baptist missionaries were eminently conspicuous. (Cheers.) Mr Sturge next proceeded to read a document signed by six missionaries, addressed to a committee of their society, in which they declared that, after a close and watchful observation of two years, they felt it due to the apprentices to say, that "they had conducted themselves in the most tranquil and peaceable manner, and had shown every disposition to be industrious where encouragement had been offered them." They felt it, they said, to be their paramount duty to denounce the system as a most iniquitous and accursed one, offensive, harassing and unjust to the apprentice, liable to innumerable abuses, with but little positive and actual protection." (Hear, hear.) Mr Sturge concluded his observations, for the length of which he apologised to the meeting, by reading the following document, which had been presented to him, by fifteen missionaries, to make what use of he thought proper, saying at the same time, that they expected to be had up to the house of assembly to answer for the statements which it contained. The parties who signed this document might be stated to possess a direct influence over one hundred thousand individuals, or one-third of the negro population. The missionaries, after bearing the highest testimony to the industry and good conduct of the negroes, proceed as follows :—

We cannot refrain expressing our deliberate opinion of the total unfitness of the apprenticeship system, as an act of preparation for freedom ; and that it is to the unparalleled patience of the apprentices, and not to its tolerant spirit, that the present peaceful and prosperous state of the island is attributable.

To you we unhesitatingly declare our belief, that this mockery of freedom is worthless as a preparation for that state to which it can have no possible affinity ; that while it represses the energy of the negro, it has rendered him distrustful of the British public, by whom he considers himself to have been cheated by a name ; that it has entailed, and is still entailing, excessive suffering, especially on the mother, and her helpless and unavoidably neglected offspring ; and that to secure its termination no effort can be considered too great.

We do, therefore, most earnestly entreat you on your return to your native land, to exert your influence to effect the total abandonment of this system, in 1838.

But if every effort fail in procuring the abolition of the term of apprenticeship to the predial apprentices, that those advantages may at least be secured to them, to which they are entitled by the provisions, imperfect as they are, of the act for the abolition of slavery.

We further urge you to watch with vigilance, any law which may be introduced into the imperial parliament, or passed by any of the colonial legislatures, to curtail the liberty of the negro after the termination of the present system; and any enactments of a restrictive and oppressive nature, calculated to keep them more degraded than any others of their fellow subjects for one moment beyond that period.

Your own observations in this colony must, we think, have convinced you, that the costly apparatus by which it was intended to secure a measure of protection to the negro, is, in many instances, made instrumental in carrying on a system of coercion and oppression, as odious as that from which he was intended to be freed.

We cannot but express our regret at the apathy manifested of late by some of those friends in England, who so long and so zealously exerted themselves in behalf of the injured sons and daughters of Africa, and must consider that the responsibility rests on them, who have the power to obtain justice for this still injured people, for any consequences that may take place; meanwhile we shall continue to exert our influence to tranquillize their minds under every disappointment, and to induce them to bear with patience the wrongs they are called upon to suffer.

Mr Sturge said, in conclusion, that he had already detained them so long that he would not add any thing to that document; as he was anxious that Dr Palmer should have an opportunity of addressing the meeting. [The statements and address of Mr Sturge occupied upwards of two hours, and he resumed his seat amidst enthusiastic cheers.]

Captain MOORSOM, in introducing Dr PALMER to the meeting, felt persuaded, from what they had heard, that there could be but one opinion as to what the people of England ought now to do, and he was sure that meeting and the town of Birmingham would not be slow to set the example. (Hear, hear.) They had heard that the property of the Negro was wantonly and maliciously destroyed—that he was defrauded of his time, that time which was purchased for him by the payment of twenty millions of money—that his person was abused—that his natural and civil rights were violated with impunity; nay, that females were treated in a manner that made him blush to think he bore the name of those who so treated them. (Cheers.) To sum up, in short, it appeared that the Negroes were suffering under such a system of cruelty, oppression, fraud, and chicanery, as the depravity of man, and the ingenuity of Satan, would alone have devised and carried into execution. (Loud applause.) This meeting, therefore, and the people of Birmingham, wanted no corroborative testimony to what JOSEPH STURGE had said; but he believed they would hear from Dr PALMER that which would be exceedingly interesting, and no more interesting than valuable; for they had objections to meet, and that they would be obliged to put them down by facts. Dr PALMER would perhaps permit him to direct his attention to a few particulars. The existing laws, supposing them to be fairly administrated, are they sufficient to ensure protection to the Negro? Also, whether magistrates and their functionaries could defend the Negro, without bringing persecution and misery on themselves? With these suggestions, he would introduce Dr PALMER to the meeting.

Dr PALMER, on coming forward, was received with much cheering. He said that he felt very incompetent to the task which he had undertaken; and he must only claim the indulgence of this meeting while he laid before them a statement of the experience he had had of the working of this system. He should say, in the first place, that he thought, at no period in the history of slavery, was it more incumbent on the friends of humanity to use strenuous exertions than at the present moment; for hitherto all the efforts made by the friends of the negro, instead of diminishing the amount of suffering, had actually increased it. (Hear, hear.) It might be asked, whence arose this result? He would answer that slavery was a system of so intractable a nature as to admit of no real improvement. They might pass laws for the modification of slavery, but the more rigid the restraints put on particular abuses, the more active would be the opposition to their benevolent provisions, and the more general would be

the disposition to oppress ; and as the execution of those laws is vested in parties who have a direct interest in perpetuating the system, it would be folly to expect them to defeat their own policy. He felt it necessary to point particularly to this subject, when he recollected that there were five millions of slaves held in bondage by other nations, that they might know the errors the people of England had committed, and learn to avoid the rocks upon which they had wrecked their hopes. (Cheers.) There was one fact which he wished to bring before this meeting, that the Act regulating the system of apprenticeship was of a harsher and more cruel character than the code which for fifteen years had regulated the system of slavery. This was a striking statement—perhaps it was a bold one ; but he was prepared to prove it true. (Cheers.) Dr Palmer here showed from different clauses in the laws for the maintenance of domestic discipline under the new system, that a greater amount of human suffering could be inflicted by the planters than was deemed necessary to uphold the old system of slavery ; yet this was the measure that was intended to extend the blessing of freedom to the unhappy Negro. The planters, under the slave code, had power to punish with thirty-nine lashes, but this was not deemed sufficient under the present system, for apprentices might now be subjected to fifty lashes. (Shame, shame.) As regarded the direct questions put by Captain Moorsom, he wished to observe, that no man who protected the Negro had the slightest chance of success, or of avoiding persecution—it was as much as a man could do to protect himself. (Hear, hear.) Dr Palmer here mentioned one case out of many in support of this observation. So late as last September, a body of apprentices came to his house, with terror depicted in their countenances, claiming protection. They said it was impossible they could remain on the estate ; that on Sunday morning, while engaged in prayer, in a house which they had built themselves for that purpose, they were alarmed by hearing a gun fired, and on looking out saw their master and one of his trainers, a ferocious character, with a drawn cutlass in his hand, and armed with pistols. They immediately fled, and his conduct has been so violent towards them that they were afraid to remain on the estate. They had been informed that it was the object of their master to drive them into rebellion, that he might have the pleasure, to use the planter's own expression, of "shooting them like pigs." It was a part of the plot to create a riot near the place where he (Dr Palmer) was in the habit of holding his court, and fall upon him, as if by accident, and dispatch him. The Negroes seeing him attacked, were expected to rush forward to his assistance, and then the work of extermination was to commence. As his name had been mixed up in the matter, he felt delicate in acting in this case, and told the Negroes to go down to Spanish Town, the seat of the executive. The governor, Sir L. Smith, who was ill with the gout, and his secretary, on hearing the nature of the charge against the planter, said he could do nothing in the matter. (Hear, hear.) Under these circumstances, application was made to Mr Harvey, whose name he wished here to mention, as a warm friend of his fellow-creatures, no matter of what rank or colour. (Cheers.) Mr Harvey had the depositions of the Negroes taken, and applied to the assistant judges of the court, but every one of these authorities refused to act. They even refused to issue a common peace-warrant, to have the parties bound over to keep the peace. He then applied to the Chief Justice with the same results. (Shame.) Having no other alternative he again applied to the Executive, and the governor was actually obliged to create a new magistrate to protect these unfortunate people. (Loud expressions of indignation.) For reasons already stated, he (Dr Palmer) could not interfere in the business, and the result was, so soon as the inquiry had terminated, Mr Harvey was called before four local magistrates to answer to a charge of harbouring these men, and after a long examination, in which Mr H. was denied the right of self-defence, he was fined in the sum of £199 10s. for harbouring runaway apprentices, and they gave him two hours to discharge the

penalty, which, if he did not pay within the time, a warrant was to be issued to commit him to the House of Correction for six months. When they came to make out the commitment, however, they found a little flaw in the construction of the act, which would render it unlawful for them to carry the latter part of the sentence into execution; therefore they had the wisdom to avoid this, but actually still hold the fine over his head. (Hear.) By his fearless and upright conduct in this matter, he had incurred the ill-will of all the planters. Dr Palmer next referred to a case which had occurred to himself. He had been directed, along with another magistrate, to inspect the state of the dungeons and hospitals in the island. These dungeons and hospitals, though there are private ones on the estates, are still under the superintendence of the magistrates, just as much as the public prisons are under the jurisdiction of the local authorities in this and other countries. The planters, however, dispute this, and assert their right to imprison their people in their own dungeons. The Governor, in order to put this right to the test, direct them to go and inspect a certain dungeon and hospital. Both were one and the same. They were under ground, in a dark, cold, damp room, where the delinquent and the sick, were promiscuously immured. There was nothing for its wretched inmates to lie upon, but the cold clay ground, and there were the unfortunate beings immured for the crime of being sick, the heaviest crime an apprentice could now commit. (Hear.) In this place there was an instrument of torture, called a coffin case, which, though not used since the abolition of slavery, was still kept to remind the unfortunate of what they had once suffered. This was a case in which five or six poor creatures were crammed till they were almost suffocated, and the sufferings of the unfortunate victims could not have been exceeded by those of the black-hole of Calcutta. In attempting to inspect this prison, Mr Giles, the proprietor, not only obstructed, but committed a most shameful assault upon them. The apprentices, however, rushed forward to their protection, and much confusion ensued, which the planters were pleased to denominate rebellion in the public papers. In consequence of this, Lord Sligo directed an indictment against Giles in the supreme Court. They gave clear testimony as to the obstruction and violence committed, but when the indictment was sent to the grand jury, they immortalised themselves by ignoring all the bills. It might be necessary in England to say that Giles himself was one of the grand jurors, and, flushed with this triumph, actually instituted proceedings against them, and he believed that he (Dr Palmer) had only escaped by leaving the island; his colleague would therefore have to bear the brunt of the action, and he hoped that heavy damages might be obtained against him, in order to bring the matter before the people of this country, as part and parcel of the system now in operation. (Hear, hear.) The mass of facts upon this subject were really so overwhelming, that it would be impossible for him to give even an outline of them within the compass of time allotted to a public meeting; he would, therefore, confine himself to a few cases of a more atrocious character. He would here draw their attention to the state of unfortunate women and children. The people of England, he is sure, never designed that a woman who had committed no offence but having a large family, should be subjected to cruelty; yet he declared that the condition of the unfortunate being he was about to refer to was much worse than it even was in the worst days of slavery. (Hear, hear.) To prove this he had collected facts to lay before the House of Commons, and he would, therefore, merely refer generally to the circumstance. This woman was protected during slavery by the planters, for they found it profitable to do so, for she was rearing young labourers to perpetuate the system. But the planters now consider, that the greater the number of children a woman has, the greater is the bar to their rights, and that their interests are not to be superseded by any claims of humanity or the natural ties between a parent and child. (Hear, hear.) Let them suppose the case of a poor woman with a young infant

six months old, another child two years, another four, and another six years old. Thus she has four helpless children to provide for. She rises in the morning and has to be at work in the field the same time as the rest of the negroes. She has no time to prepare food for her young family—her infant, of course, comes with her to the field, but the rest are left unprotected at home. (Hear, hear.) In slavery there are nurses provided on the estate to meet the exigencies of cases like this, and protect the children; but the nurse, under the apprenticeship system, had been withdrawn, and the children are left to themselves. When the mother goes to the field she is forced to work with the infant tied to her back, and she is not allowed to run and place her infant in shelter when rain sets in. (Shame, shame.) If, in the course of the day, she gives offence to the overseer or field-keeper, or even the black driver, at the close of her labour, instead of retiring to her family, she can be immured in a dungeon, even though it has rained the whole day, and she and her infant are drenched to the skin. (Loud expressions of indignation.) There are hundreds of cases of this kind occurring constantly in Jamaica. Her children are thus left totally unprotected, for the overseer and master consider that they have no claim whatever upon them. If the mother, driven to distraction by the neglect of her children, and anxiety for their safety, should taunt her inhuman overseer with cruelty, she is probably charged with insolence, and sent to “dance” the treadmill for seven, ten, or fourteen days, or to work in penal gangs for seven days; and all which time she has to make good to her master. (Shame, shame.) After noticing many other cases, equalling in cruelty the above, Dr Palmer proceeded to notice the extent of punishment to which apprentices were subjected under the New Law. At the commencement of the system, it could be proved, that there was a greater amount of coercion and suffering inflicted on apprentices during the first twelve months of the apprenticeship law, than he could safely say, had been awarded during the two last years of slavery. (Hear.) The planters seemed to delight in the severity of the Magistrate; and it was their constant taunt, “You were not satisfied with the old law; but this is the new law—this is the King’s law—it is your friends in England law: how do you like it?” (Shame, shame.) Though much of their cruelty had been taken from the hands of the planters, they had still a fearful amount of power, and that power they would endeavour to retain after the year 1840, unless strenuous measures were at once adopted, to put a stop for ever to this nefarious system. (Cheers.) With regard to the workhouse punishment, it was merely altered since the apprenticeship. What they did in these workhouses he knew not. Whether it was lead that was tied on the lash, or whether it was twisted with wire, he knew not, but the infliction of thirty-nine lashes with the cat now, he would undertake to say was severer in many instances, than two hundred lashes under the former system. (Hear, hear.) He would notice a most horrible and afflicting case, that came under his own observation, in which a poor creature, for simply asking payment of his wages for extra labour, had received a punishment of so dreadful a nature as to ruin him for life. Robinson had, along with his fellow apprentices, contrived to give his extra labour during crop for the sum of 2s. 1d. currency per week; payments were always made on Saturday morning; it happened one Saturday, that Robinson required to go to Spanish Town; he desired his wife to receive his money; the Overseer refused to pay it, as he was not present to receive it himself; he took no notice of this until the following week, when being paid for the current week’s wages, he asked for the amount due for the previous week. The Overseer refused it, and ordered him to be off; the man indignantly replied “I work for the money, and it belongs to me, and you have no right to keep it from me, and if you no pay me I will go complain to massa;” the Overseer threatened to kick him out of the place; he went to his master, but got no satisfaction. On Monday he was taken into custody, and taken before the Special Magistrate. He (Dr Palmer) had no

hesitation in giving the name of the magistrate, it was Mr Thomas Baines, who as now in England, and might deny any part of the statement if he were able, Robinson was charged with insolence and threatening his Overseer, threatening to complain to his master; it was positively sworn to that, Mr Baines refused to hear a word in defence, and forthwith sentenced Robinson to receive 39 lashes at the Workhouse. How the punishment was inflicted there were no means of ascertaining, but it would appear that the flesh was literally ploughed up on the man's back; he was taken back to the estate, the blood streaming from his lacerated shoulders; he was placed in the Hospital, and kept there, chiefly confined in a dark room for several weeks, during which time he received no food, nor even dressing, for his mangled back, from the unfeeling Overseer. From this punishment the man has never recovered, and never can recover; his back presents a horrid spectacle where the cat has torn off the flesh; a large mass of malignant looking tubercles had arisen, which caused extreme torture when the rays of the sun or the slightest cold air came in contact with the part; the man's strength was gone—his constitution impaired, and his mind had become a good deal affected by his long continued sufferings. In describing the agony he had endured, he became almost frantic, a very distressing affection of the heart had been produced, and which it is probable he will carry to his grave. Dr P. proceeded to say, that notwithstanding this poor man's sufferings, the overseer had since been repeatedly endeavouring to obtain a repetition of the punishment, which was only prevented by Robinson appealing to the humanity of the magistrates, by exhibiting his lacerated back. [Expressions of deep indignation burst from all parts of the meeting during the foregoing recital.] Dr Palmer recounted several other scandalous cases of oppression and cruelty, which we regret our limits will not at present enable us to insert.

On the conclusion of Dr Palmer's address, which produced a powerful impression on the meeting—

JAMES JAMES, Esq. said, that he was about to ask the meeting to do what he was sure they were prepared to do,—namely, to express their sense of the value of the services of an individual, who in the land of oppression, could be the friend of the oppressed. (Cheers.) He did not know what the meeting felt on the subject, but he (Mr James) felt that if he was situated as Doctor Palmer was at that moment, he would rather be in the possession of the recollection that he had faithfully discharged his duty in the land of the oppressed, than in possession of the twenty millions of money which had been so uselessly lavished by the nation. But they would not let the matter rest no longer—the sufferings of 800,000 of their fellow creatures would reproach them if they did; and they were not prepared to submit to that reproach. (Loud and vehement cheering.) Mr James concluded by moving a vote of thanks to Dr Palmer and Mr Harvey for their exertions in behalf of the oppressed Negroes.

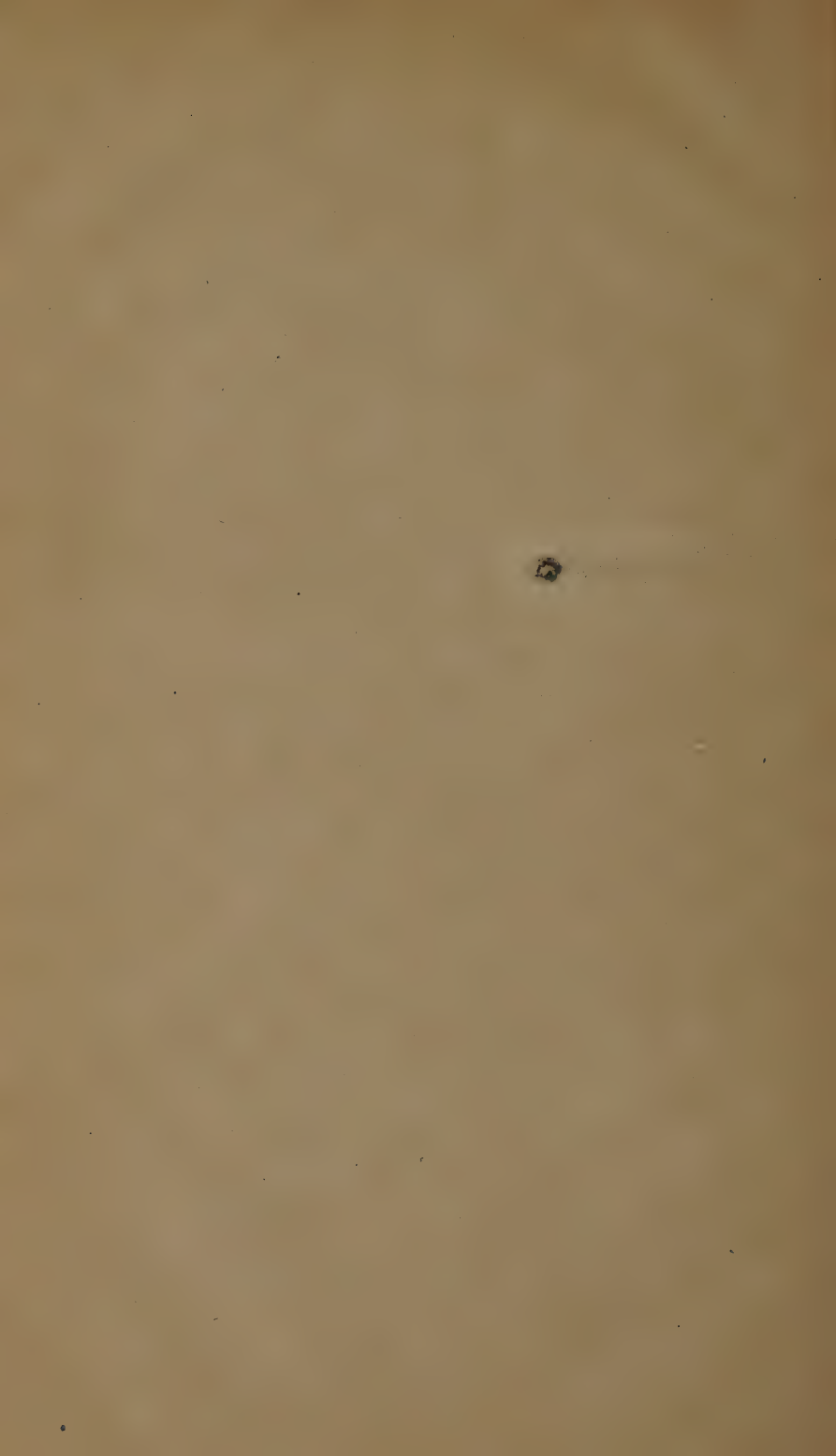
WILLIAM BOULTBEE, Esq., seconded the resolution. He said that it was exceedingly distressing to hear that the Negroes were still suffering such oppressions; but he confessed the result of the scheme which had been adopted, did not surprise him; for he never perceived a semblance of fairness in the appropriation of that money; and it was a source of satisfaction to his feelings that in Birmingham and London he had raised his voice in opposition to the system. (Hear.) If good laws were passed for the protection of the poor Negro they would be unavailing, unless they could find gentlemen who had resolution to carry them into effect. Two such gentlemen were named in the resolution before them—men who had courage and virtue to carry the laws into effect. They had thrown expediency to the winds, acted on principle, reckless of the consequence to themselves—(loud cheers); and if the government of the country did not afford these gentlemen protection, he for one would consider them as utterly unworthy of the confidence of the country. (Hear, hear.) Mr Boulton, in conclusion, observed, that he had never performed an act of his

life with a more entire conviction of its rectitude and propriety, than by giving his cordial support to, and seconding the resolution moved by his worthy friend the Low Bailiff. (Cheers.)

The Rev. T. MORGAN moved the next resolution, which was seconded by the Rev. HUGH HUTTON, who recited with much power and feeling, some beautiful lines, in every way worthy of the author and the subject.

At the repeated calls of the meeting, Mr GEORGE THOMPSON, the zealous and eloquent champion of the cause of the oppressed slave, next addressed the assembly, but we regret the length to which our report has already extended prevents us from giving even an outline of his powerful and argumentative speech. Several other gentlemen likewise addressed the meeting; and after a vote of thanks had been unanimously awarded to the High Bailiff for his kindness in presiding upon the occasion, the meeting separated about half-past three o'clock.





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